

FEDERAL REGISTER - 42 CFR Ch. 1 (10-1-93 Edition)  
PART 5 - DESIGNATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAs)

Summary of **Appendix A** - Criteria for Designation of Areas Having Shortages of  
**Primary Medical Care Professionals**

Designations are based on the degree of underservice for a geographic area, population group, or a facility (non-profit, public medical facility and medium-maximum security federal and state correctional institutions).

*Requirements for Geographic Primary Care HPSA:* 1) Rational service area; 2) Population:physician ratio of 3500:1; 3) Contiguous area resource considerations (excessively distant = 30 minutes travel time; over utilized; i.e., unusually long waits for routine medical services, excessive use of emergency rooms for primary care services, 2/3s of area physicians do not accept new patients; otherwise inaccessible).

*Requirements for Population Group Primary Care HPSA:* 1) Low income, Medicaid-eligible, migrant farm worker, Native American, homeless populations; 2) 3000:1 population:physician ratio in the defined rational service area; 3) Contiguous area resource considerations (excessively distant = 30 minutes, over utilized, otherwise inaccessible).

*Population Count:* For a geographic HPSA designation, the population count = Total permanent resident civilian population. Adjustments can be made for seasonal residents, migratory workers. The most recent Claritas database is the primary data source for population count. For a population group HPSA, the population count = the number of people in a specific population group; i.e., low-income, Medicaid eligible, migrant farm worker, Native American, homeless.

*Primary Care Provider Count:* The physician provider count = All non-Federal MDs/DOs providing direct patient care in primary care specialties (GP/FP, IM, PEDI, OB/GYN). Full-time-equivalencies (FTEs) are based on 40 hours of direct patient care per week. FTEs for practitioners providing direct service for less than 40 hours per week are adjusted accordingly. Interns/residents = 0.1 FTE. Hospital staff physicians involved exclusively with inpatient care and ER physicians are excluded from the count. FTE physicians practicing in outpatient departments/primary care clinics are included.

*Determination of Insufficient Capacity of Existing Primary Care Providers:* Insufficient capacity exists if at least 2 of the following criteria are met: 1) More than 8,000 office visits per year per FTE primary care physician in the area; 2) Long wait for appointments for routine medical services - more than 7 days for established patients, 14 days for new patients; 3) Excessive average waiting time - longer than 1 hour where patients have appointments, 2 hours where patients are treated on first-come, first-served basis; 4) Excessive use of ERs for routine primary care; 5) More than 2/3s of area physicians do not accept new patients; 6) Abnormally low utilization of health services - average of 2.0 or less office visits per year on the part of the area's population.

*Contiguous Area Considerations:* 1) Primary care providers are more than 30 minutes travel time from the population center(s) being considered for designation; 2) Contiguous area population-to-FTE physician ratio is in excess of 2000:1; 3) Primary care providers in contiguous areas are inaccessible because of specific access barriers; i.e., linguistic, cultural, economic barriers.

*Benefits of HPSA Designation:* 1) National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Assistance for recruitment and retention of primary care providers in underserved areas; 2) Rural Health Clinic Certification; 3) CMS's 10% Medicare Incentive Program for geographic designations; 4) Eligibility for state and local resources; i.e. State Loan Repayment Program.